ABSTRACT

A novel multiple channel architecture is designed to allow targeted advertising directed to television terminals connected to an operations center or a cable headend. Program channels carry television programs. During commercial breaks in the television programs, advertisements, which are also broadcast on the program channel, are displayed. However, additional feeder channels carry alternate advertising that may be better suited for certain viewing audiences. The operations center or the cable headend generate group assignment rules that allow a set top terminal to assign itself to groups, based on information collected and maintained solely within the set top terminal. A switching plan is then generated that instructs the television terminals to remain with the program channel or to switch to one of the alternate feeder channels during the program breaks based on its group assignment. The television terminals record which channels were viewed during the program breaks, and use this information for future local targeting of advertising.

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